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REMARKS

UPON

A SERMON,

PREACHED

AT ST. MARY'S

ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1831.

BY THE

REV. EDWARD BURTON, D.D.

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY.

While we take the names of the Reformers in our mouth, we neither
preach their doctrine, nor imitate their practice.

Sermon, p. 50.

OXFORD,

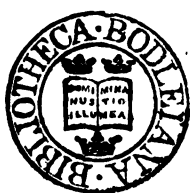
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REMARKS,

&c.

THOUGH I listened, not without pain, to the Sermon, which was preached at St. Mary's on Sunday the 6th of February ; though there was much which was at variance with my own ideas of Christian humility and Christian charity ; yet, as far as the argument was concerned, the evil seemed to carry its own antidote, and I had no intention of noticing statements, which might possibly bring the Preacher into danger as to the soundness of his tenets. The case is however materially altered by the publication of the Sermon. The public may now suppose—at least the enemies of the University may insinuate—that these are the doctrines, which are palatable to the modern divines of Oxford : it will be known, that an audience was attracted, such as never perhaps was witnessed for numbers within the walls of St. Mary's ; and it may be thought, that this was a compliment, which all orders among us were anxious to pay to truth.

It is to rescue the University from suspicions such as these, that I step forward most unwillingly to offer my remarks. I trust, that I shall not be betrayed into any thing uncharitable or offensive: and I am anxious thus early to express my conviction, that every word, which was uttered, proceeded from conscientious sincerity.

The Sermon has indeed brought heavy charges against the great body of the clergy. They are charged with violating the Articles, which they have repeatedly and solemnly subscribed; they are charged with denying justification to be the free gift of God; with ascribing salvation to the merit of good works; and with preaching the freedom of the human will, when the existence of such a freedom is denied by our Articles and by the Scriptures. I could have wished, while these grievous charges were so rapidly pronounced, that there had been some signs of sorrow and compassion for those who were believed to be in error: I could have wished, that Christian zeal had been more tempered by Christian charity.

Before we proceed to matters of doctrine, I would notice a defect of this kind in what is said at p. 46. concerning College testimonials. Colleges may have sinned in this particular: but as a general remark, and as applicable to the present day, I confidently assert it to be utterly untrue,

that College testimonials for Orders are thoughtlessly and improperly signed. We are greatly improved in this respect. In all matters connected with the parochial ministry, I can see a decided advance in spiritual-mindedness among those who are in authority: and I should have thought better of the effect, which God's mercies have upon the heart, if a thankful acknowledgment for the progress, which has been made, had been coupled with prayers for still further blessings. Instead of this we read at p. 46, "that the Heads and resident Fellows of Colleges in this University have had, *and have now*, no small share in the introduction and perpetuation of these corruptions: that these testimonials of pious and sober living have been given to men notorious for nothing so much in their day, as profaneness, debauchery, and all kinds of riotous living." I know not in what spirit this unqualified declaration was made: but if a person should be pointed out to me, who is now in the ministry, and who once was a sinner such as is here described, I know but of one question, which I should put. I should ask, Had he repented of and abandoned his sinful course, before he was ordained? I am aware, that some persons look upon repentance as having little to do with this question: but the Apostles,

who always coupled repentance and remission of sins, thought otherwise: and it seems to be forgotten, that if the sinners, who are so unsparingly denounced, had been led by faith in Christ to ask for forgiveness of their former sins, the charge becomes more than unmeaning, it is uncharitable and unchristian. It is not for us to say, whether a notorious profligate is not *now* fit to be admitted into the ministry: and if it were not for the personality of the allusion, I would quote the author of this Sermon at p. 31, 32. as deciding the question in the affirmative. I will not dwell upon the fact, which ought to have presented itself to the preacher's mind, and which might have qualified the bitterness of his expressions, that he may have known, when a young man, the vices of his companions, which yet had not come to the knowledge of the Head or Tutors of his College: neither is it correct to say that "these testimonials affirm, that *during the time* " *of his residence at College* he hath behaved himself honestly, piously, and soberly:" this is said, at least in most instances, if not all, of *the three years last past*, and not of the whole time of residence; which makes a most material difference. But without dwelling upon these points, I repeat, that the mere fact of a man *having been* a sinner, (and the cases which are mentioned amount only

to this,) is not a sufficient proof, that he is for ever unfit for the ministry.

Another passage, which might perhaps be called in question as to its connexion with the subject, and the mildness of its expressions, is that which declaims so loudly against the present system, by which Bishops are appointed. I have no wish to uphold abuses, or to say that there is no part of our Church-establishment, which admits improvement: but when an abuse is pointed out, and still more when it has infected, as is here asserted, the whole body of the Church, I know but of one feeling which would pass across my mind: a feeling of unfeigned sorrow, that spots should disfigure so fair a fabric. I know also, that this feeling ought to be followed by earnest prayer to God, that He would mercifully remove the blemish. Let it be remembered, that though the surgeon is not to flinch, when he dresses the wound of his patient, yet he is to probe it delicately and tenderly; and while one hand directs the knife, the other is ready to administer the healing ointment. What says the great Apostle, *I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.* (2 Cor. xiii. 10.) Can it be supposed, that the Church of England or its

rulers were raised in the opinion of the congregation, when the appointment of our Bishops was pronounced to be a violation of the Articles, and fraught with the most disastrous consequences? If it had been said in plain terms, that Bishops ought under no circumstances to be appointed by the Government, it would have opened a fair ground of argument; and though I should have declined entering at present into so irrelevant a discussion, I should duly have appreciated the sincerity of the opinion. But it is asserted, that the appointment of the Bishops is not only wrong in itself, but is in violation of the thirty-seventh Article. I will allow, if required, that the Article is ambiguous upon this point: (though, as will easily be seen, the Article does not really touch upon the appointment of the Bishops :) but in cases of doubtful interpretation, the best of all comments is the recorded opinion or practice of the authors. Now it is notorious, that those great and good men, (for such they undoubtedly were,) who composed our Articles, received their episcopal appointment from the Crown. It is impossible therefore, that they drew up an Article, which intended to assert, that such a mode of appointment was contrary to the doctrine of the Church of England: and when we read, that "the appointment of every one of the

“ Bishops is entirely in his Majesty’s hands, so
 “ that while the principle of the Article remains
 “ sound, yet the practice of the Church in this
 “ matter is unsound,” it is obvious to reply, that
 the practice as well as the principle is precisely
 now what it was at the framing of the Articles,
 when “ the appointment of every one of the
 “ Bishops was entirely in his Majesty’s hands.”
 I repeat, that I am not now arguing the abstract
 question of the best mode of appointing Bishops.
 Wiser heads than ours, or at least than mine,
 may discuss that point: but I only wish to ob-
 serve, that the inference concerning the violation
 of the thirty-seventh Article is most illogical,
 and involves a gratuitous attack upon the con-
 duct of our spiritual and civil rulers ever since
 the Reformation.

These are some of the passages, which seem at
 variance with the apostolical injunction, *Let all
 things be done to edifying*. Another, which I shall
 but briefly touch, is that where the Preacher
 speaks of himself, and those who agree with him,
 as objects of persecution. I know the value,
 which some persons set upon the title of a martyr.
 When a man has once forgotten, that the Gospel
 is a religion of unity, and has taught himself to
 say, *I am of Paul*, or *I am of Apollos*, the greatest
 pleasure, which he feels, next to that of a triumph,

is that of being persecuted. Let me hope, that this is not a pleasure, which is courted in the present instance. I will undertake to say that it is one, which will not be received. I may perhaps allude to circumstances, which occurred not many years ago: and I allude to them, because it enables me to bear tribute to one, whose friendliness and kindness of heart still live in my warmest recollections. I would say no more upon this painful topic, than that some of the parishioners of St. Ebbe's denounced their pastor to the Bishop as a preacher of unsound doctrines. The party accused best knows, whether he was then treated with kindness: and he also knows, whether that kindness might not have dwelt a little longer in his memory and his gratitude. It is acknowledged in this Sermon, that the doctrines contained in it differ from those of a large majority of churchmen; and the fact has long been known and deplored by those who might have interfered. But they have never done so. It is true, that they look upon the maintainers of such doctrines, as perverters of the Gospel: but if this constitutes persecution, both parties are so far equally guilty. It will be remembered however, that the persons in authority have never denounced their opponents from the pulpit: they have never said, that the preachers of Calvinism "detest and contradict the

“ Gospel^a,” that they are “ filled with all sorts of
 “ hypocrisy^b,” that they are “ Baal’s wor-
 “ shippers^c,” or “ prophets that preach lies^d.”
 These are expressions, which perhaps only one
 person among us would have allowed himself
 to use: and if that person has as fully forgiven him-
 self, as he is forgiven by him who is writing these
 Remarks, we may join in praying, that the uncha-
 ritable expressions will be blotted out from the
 books of God’s remembrance.

I must now come to the exposition of the
 Gospel; and I trust that I shall not be thought
 unreasonable or presumptuous, if I say at once,
 that I am not entering into controversy. Un-
 worthy as I may be to fill the station, in which I
 am placed, my conduct would be culpable and
 sinful, if I could listen with indifference, while the
 doctrines of the Gospel are mistated. The
 Sermon now before me professes to contain an
 exposition of that Gospel, which Jesus Christ
 delivered to his apostles: but in the name of
 Paul, of Cephas, and of Christ, I say that this is
 not the Gospel.

I will allow, in the language of our Articles,
 that “ as the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria,
 “ and Antioch has erred, so also the Church of”

^a Sermon, p. 15. ^b Page 30. ^c Page 46. ^d Page 48.

England may have erred. The Calvinistic scheme may be right; and they, who oppose it, may be wrong. But this is not the present question; or at least not the whole of it. We are told, that the Articles of the Church of England are Calvinistic; that they deny the existence of free will, or the necessity of repentance and good works as connected with salvation; and the great body of the clergy are denounced for preaching these doctrines in opposition to Scripture and to the Articles. These charges having been so boldly advanced, without even a shadow of proof, I will simply state a few facts, which demonstrate the contrary.

It is notorious, that the English Reformation was carried on in conformity with the principles of the German Reformers. When Cranmer was commissioned to draw up Articles of faith in 1551, Calvin had scarcely begun to propagate his peculiar opinions concerning predestination. His first public controversy was in that year, and his first publication upon the subject in 1552^a. It would appear from an earlier work, which he printed in 1535^b, that at that time he had himself

^a De eterna Dei prædestinatione.

^b Preface to a French translation of the New Testament.
See Epist. p. 395, &c. ed. 1575.

held the universality of redemption : and so late as 1555 he had to encounter considerable opposition even in Switzerland. He himself acknowledges and complains, that Melancthon was opposed to him concerning predestination and election^c : but if there was any person, who had an influence upon the English reformers, it was Melancthon. He was in close correspondence with Cranmer : and while the latter was engaged in preparing the Articles, the chair of Divinity at Cambridge (which was vacant by the death of Bucer in 1551) was offered to Melancthon.

The sentiments of this reformer concerning the peculiar tenets of Calvin are well known. Concerning free will he says, “ Cum ordimur a
 “ verbo, hic concurrunt tres causæ bonæ actionis,
 “ verbum Dei, Spiritus Sanctus, et humana
 “ voluntas, assentiens nec repugnans verbo Dei^b. ”
 “ omnes homines posse converti ad Deum,
 “ nec voluntatem se habere pure passive, sed
 “ aliquo modo active, ac assentiri posse Deo
 “ trahentiⁱ. ” His opinion concerning repentance is equally plain : “ Nunc vulgare est vociferare de
 “ fide : et tamen intelligi quid sit fides non potest,
 “ nisi prædicata pœnitentia. Plane vinum novum

^c Epist. p. 108, 109, 133, 134, 148.
 lib. arb. p. 89.

ⁱ Op. vol. i. p. 415.

^b Loc. Theol. de

“ in utres veteres infundunt, qui fidem sine poenitentia, sine doctrina timoris Dei, sine doctrina Legis prædicant, et ad carnalem quandam securitatem assuefaciunt vulgus ^k.” He repeatedly supports universal against particular election, as in the following passage: “ Cum promissio gratiæ sit universalis, ut manifestum est, et necesse sit nos obedire promissioni, aliquod discrimen inter electos et rejectos a voluntate nostra sumendum est; videlicet, repugnantes promissioni rejici, e contra vero amplectentes promissionem recipi ^l.”

Melancthon was also the person, who drew up the Confession of Augsburgh: and although he did not introduce into that formulary the topics of predestination and election, we find the most unequivocal declaration concerning the necessity of good works in Articles six, and twenty: and concerning the efficacy of repentance, and the defectibility of grace, in Article eleven. The resemblance of our Thirty-nine Articles to the Confession of Augsburgh is too well known to require specification: and I again remind the reader of these Articles, that Melancthon was in communication with Cranmer during the construction of them.

^k Articuli pro Vis. Eccles. Saxon. Art. *Pastorum Officium*.

^l Op. vol. iii. p. 777.

Cranmer himself has left his opinions on record concerning some of the controverted points. On the subject of predestination he has said little: but in the Catechism, which he caused to be translated from the Latin of Justus Jonas, children are told to “*suffer* the benefits “ of God to, be poured freely upon them ” :” “ *to fit and prepare themselves*, or rather *give place* “ to the Holy Ghost which preventeth us ” .” We are told, that “ it is our part to conform “ our wills to his will, and to *desire* Him to give us “ his grace, and accomplish his most holy will ” .” Those Homilies also, which seem to be ascribed, on the best authority, to Cranmer, assert the necessity of repentance, as connected with faith, in a manner which leaves no room for a Calvinistic interpretation.

Latimer also, who undoubtedly assisted Cranmer in framing the Articles, writes as follows : “ If we will leave our sins and wickedness, and “ study to live according unto His will and com- “ mandments, no doubt He will perform his pro- “ mises, which He hath made unto us, of everlast- “ ing life. . . . Now therefore, if we will follow “ Him, and leave our wicked living, convert and “ turn ourselves unto Him, be sorry for that which

^m Page. 41. ed. 1829

ⁿ Page 120.

^o Page 149.

“ is past, and intend to amend our life now
 “ forward ; if we do so, no doubt we shall live
 “ with Him everlastingly^p. ” “ The promises of
 “ Christ our Saviour are general ; they pertain
 “ to all mankind. . . . Wherefore then should
 “ any man despair, to shut out himself from
 “ these promises of Christ, which be general and
 “ pertain to the whole world^q ? ” “ Now seeing
 “ that the Gospel is universal, it appeareth, that
 “ He would have all mankind saved, and that
 “ the fault is not in Him, if we be damned.
 “ For it is written, *God would have all men to be*
 “ *saved*. His salvation is sufficient to save all
 “ mankind : but we are so wicked of ourselves,
 “ that we refuse the same, and we will not take
 “ it, when it is offered to us ; and therefore He
 “ saith, *Few are chosen*. ” So utterly untenable
 is the notion, both as a question of history or
 internal evidence, that the framers of our
 Articles intended to embody the tenets of Calvin.
 The fact is historically and doctrinally impossible.

It will be said perhaps, that our Articles were
 altered in the reign of Elizabeth, and that changes
 were then made, which contain the sentiments
 of Calvin. I am aware of the support, which
 this *conjecture* seems to receive from the history

^p Sermons, p. 247. ed. 1584.

^q Page 182.

^r Page 327.

of the times. I am aware, that the English Protestants, who fled abroad from the persecution of Mary, were brought into close contact with the Calvinistic doctrines ; and that many of them diffused these doctrines, when they returned to England. The lamentable results of this contagion have not yet ceased among us : but I wholly deny, as a question of fact, that this was the case with the persons who revised our Articles. The author of this Sermon specifies the ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, and seventeenth Articles as those, for which he would willingly lay down his neck : p. 43. and he applies particularly to these, what he says of his conviction, “ that the Spirit of God did guide the “ pen of those men, who drew up that sound form “ of words contained in the doctrinal Articles of “ the English Church.” From the bottom of my heart I repeat this conviction : but I doubt, whether the author was aware of the alterations, which were made in the Articles in the year 1562. The eleventh Article did not exist at all till that time ; and the tenth and twelfth, with several others, received some additions or alterations. Concerning these additions, it is a curious and interesting fact, that nearly all of them were demonstrably taken from a *Lutheran* document ; from the Confession of Wirtemberg, which was drawn up at the time when Cranmer was prepar-

ing the original Articles. The Wirtemberg Confession is expressly said in the preface to be a compendium of that of Augsburg, which had already served as a model to our Reformers, and in which no one has as yet been able to discover the peculiar tenets of Calvin. So little progress had the Calvinistic doctrines made among our divines between the years 1553 and 1562.

It is at the same time not to be denied, as the author of this Sermon observes, that the Calvinistic tenets had many patrons in the reigns of Elizabeth and James: but when he draws his inference, and says, "in those days *therefore*, " whatsoever may be the case now, our Articles " were supposed to speak what they mean, and " our ministers were required to preach accor-
"dingly," he exactly mistates the fact. To take one instance, the sixteenth Article, which expressly asserts the defectibility of grace, it is plain, that this Article was considered to be opposed to Calvinism, or the divines of that persuasion would not have asked to have it altered at the Conference at Hampton Court in 1603*. At a later period, in 1643, the Assembly of Divines proposed a modification of several of the Articles, "to render their sense

* An account of this Conference is printed in the Phoenix, vol. i. The reader may particularly consult page 151.

“ more express, and determinate in favour of Calvinism^t.” This attempt likewise failed : all which shews, that at different periods there have been members of our Church, who maintained the sentiments of Calvin : but it also shews that they were in a minority, and that the Reformers themselves and the framers of our Articles were not Calvinistic.

The doctrine of our Church, as of the German Reformers, was, that man of his own free will could never perform works, which would merit the favour of heaven, or remove the consequences of Adam’s disobedience. The mercy of God alone removed these consequences by the death of his Son : and the grace of God alone moves us by his Holy Spirit to accept the terms which are offered : but the Church also holds, as did the German Reformers, that this spiritual grace is offered to all persons without distinction ; and that all persons may accept or reject it. He, who accepts it, believes in Christ, and is taken into covenant with God by baptism. When he is baptized, he is figuratively said to have died with Christ : the penalty denounced upon him, as a child of Adam, is discharged : his past sins are blotted out : he figuratively, i. e. spiritually,

^t Neal’s History of the Puritans, vol. i. p. 48. ed. 1754.

rises again a new creature, and at that moment is righteous in the sight of God : his own sins, or that of his first parents, condemned him to death ; the mercy of God has restored him to life ; and this act of placing him in the covenant is termed justification. Every baptized person is justified : his past sins are forgotten : his faith is counted to him for righteousness : and if he should die before the commission of actual sin, he will undoubtedly be saved. This is the doctrine of the Church concerning justification. It is the first step in the application of God's scheme of redemption to a sinner : but the Church never confounded justification with salvation, as does the Sermon now before me. St. Paul clearly distinguishes them, *Being now justified* (or rather *having been justified*) *by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him*, Rom. v. 9. Justification is a thing past, salvation is a thing future. Justification has no reference whatever to works, except that it removes their guilt, and that the person to be justified must believe in Christ, and repent of his evil works. *Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins*, was the language of St. Peter at the first preaching of the Gospel. Not that repentance procures the remission of sins : if Christ had not died, an

ocean of penitential tears could not have washed away our guilt : but God has decreed that the penitent alone shall be able to apply to themselves the merit of Christ's death.

When a sinner is thus justified, and commences his spiritual life as a new creature, he must be *careful to maintain good works*, Titus iii. 8. he is *created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, Eph. ii. 10. If he again commit sin, he must repent : and according to his obedience and his repentance, will his faith be accepted or rejected at the last day. Not that obedience or repentance cooperate with faith in making a man righteous : not even faith itself can do this. It is the death of Christ, which alone *makes a man righteous* : and faith is the mean, whereby we apply this righteousness to ourselves. God will not impute righteousness to any individual, who has not faith : and if he believe in Christ, he must keep Christ's commandments. *Faith without works is dead*, James ii. 20. *Faith worketh by love*, Gal. v. 6.

The leading error of the Sermon now before me is, that it confounds justification with salvation. It assumes, that a person, who has been justified, has his past sins forgiven him, not only at the time of his justification, i. e. at his first admission into the covenant, but during the

whole of his spiritual course : and hence comes the doctrine of assurance and of the indefectibility of grace. Nay, we are told, that a believer in Christ not only is " without any spot or " blemish of sin in the sight of God : " but that " the Devil tempts us to believe through the " medium of our feeling, that God takes notice " and is angry with us on account of sin." p. 26. The reader of the Gospel may shudder at the assertion, that sorrow and fear on account of sin are suggested by the Devil : but I turn from the dreadful declaration, and proceed to state what has been and is still the doctrine of the Church.

The indefectibility of grace is expressly condemned by our Church in her sixteenth Article, and it was condemned without any exception by the German Reformers^u. The New Testament also condemns it : *Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall*, 1 Cor. x. 12. *Give diligence to make your calling and election sure*, 2 Pet. i. 10. *Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died*, Rom. xiv. 15. The last text expressly declares, that a man may have been among the number of those, *for whom Christ died*, and yet he may be *destroyed* ; i. e. he may be destroyed spiritually : he may lose the title to

^u Confession of Augsburg, Art. xi.

salvation, which he once possessed. And what is it, which destroys him? It is clearly the example of another person, who, like himself, believes in Christ, but who lives wickedly. And shall we say, when a man thus *destroys his brother, for whom Christ died*, that he is not acting from free will? I shudder when I think of the alternative, which makes God the destroyer of a person, for whom Christ died. Truly might Calvin say of his own notion of election, “*Decretum quidem horribile fateor*”^{*} and I turn from this melancholy perversion of Scripture and of reason to admire with humble thankfulness the doctrines of our own reformed and apostolical Church.

I again repeat, that the Church of England and the German reformers maintained the universality of redemption, the necessity of good works as the fruits of a justifying faith, the freedom of the will as to obeying or disobeying the Spirit, the defectibility of grace, and the conditional offer of salvation. The Church holds, that justification is a free gift, and that salvation is a free gift: i. e. God had a perfect right to withhold the one or the other. But He has also a right to impose conditions, when after having justified a man freely, He bids

^{*} Institut. iii. 23. sect. 7.

him work out his own salvation. It is a mistake to say, that a free gift excludes conditions^y: on the contrary, the very nature of a covenant implies conditions: and if God makes the prize of our high calling to be a participation in the merits of Christ's death, and if He gives us his Holy Spirit to enable us to obtain the prize, the gift of salvation is still perfectly gratuitous. Hence all that we read at the beginning of the Sermon concerning salvation being *a free gift*^z and not merely *an offer*, arises from confusion of ideas, and the Preacher is combating an imaginary opponent. When he asks at p. 8, " Shall our works, our duties, our alms, have the least effect in moving God to save us?" I answer, Certainly not, the notion never entered into the mind of the most zealous anti-calvinist, if the question mean, Did our works, &c. move God to send his Son to die for man? But because God has of his own free grace and mercy opened the

^y Sermon, p. 9.

^z When the Preacher is less hurried, he will perhaps read his text in Greek, and will alter the sentence, in which he says, " Lest we should make a mistake concerning the matter or manner of God's giving, he hath *added* another word here to clear it up: we read of the things *freely* given to us of God." p. 8. There is only *one word* in the Greek, *χαριστίαν*. I would also observe, that John i. 11. at p. 10, probably means i. 12. and the text is directly contrary.

kingdom of heaven to all believers, it does not follow, that He has coupled his free gift with no conditions. I say, *it does not follow*: and it would be better to discuss the question mildly, than to assert the negative positively. There is a similar confusion at p. 29, where the anti-calvinistic preachers are censured, as if they said, “ Before we may have any assurance of being “ *accepted in Christ*, we must examine our hearts, “ and see whether there are sufficient evidences of “ our state.” But such a sentence was perhaps never introduced, except into this Sermon: nor did any person ever say, as we read in p. 33, that “ we cannot tell whether we be called, “ pardoned, chosen, and accepted in Christ.” Every baptized person feels assured of all this. There is no doubt as to our being able to feel assurance of “ being *accepted in Christ*:” i. e. of having been taken into covenant: the question is, whether we can feel assurance of finally receiving the promise of the covenant: and the question is answered in the negative by St. Peter, when he says, *Wherefore give diligence to make your calling and election sure*: for if ye do these things, *ye shall never fall*. 2 Pet. i. 10.

That a man is *justified* by faith, but that his final *salvation* will depend upon the manner in which he receives the influence of the Spirit, is the

doctrine of the Church of England, of the Lutheran Reformers, of the Fathers, and of the New Testament. If the Church of England has erred upon these points, she errs together with the noble army of martyrs, and the glorious company of the apostles. I assert fearlessly, and could prove it to demonstration, that there was no Christian writer for the first four centuries, except Augustin, who held sentiments upon any of these points at all in accordance with those of Calvin. Calvin was himself perfectly aware, that the Fathers could not be quoted on his side. He says, “ Quod si nos “ patrum auctoritas movet, illi quidem assidue “ in ore habent vocabulum ^a” (liberum arbitrium.) Again, “ Magnum mihi præjudicium attulisse “ forsan videar, qui Scriptores omnes ecclesias- “ ticos, excepto Augustino, ita ambigue aut varie “ in hac re locutos esse confessus sum, ut certum “ quippiam ex eorum scriptis haberi nequeat. “ Hoc enim perinde nonnulli interpretabuntur, “ quasi a suffragii jure depellere ideo ipsos “ voluerim, quia mihi sint omnes adversarii ^b.” Again, “ Vulgo existimant Deum, prout cujus- “ que merita fore prævidet, ita inter homines “ discernere; quos ergo sua gratia fore non

^a Instit. ii. 2, 8.

^b Ibid. 9.

“ indignos præcognoscit, eos in filiorum locum
 “ cooptare; quorum ingenia ad malitiam et
 “ impietatem propensura dispicit, eos mortis
 “ damnationi devovere. Neque hæc vulgo re-
 “ cepta opinio solius vulgi est: habuit enim
 “ sæculis omnibus magnos authores. Quod in-
 “ genue fateor, ne quis causæ nostræ magnopere
 “ obfuturum confidat, si eorum nomina contra
 “ opponantur.” These confessions will perhaps
 make an impression upon those, who prefer
 the pious humility of Cranmer and Melancthon to
 the unbending dogmatism of Calvin.

It has been my object simply to state what
 is the doctrine of the Church of England upon
 these points. The Church of England is not put
 upon her defence; still less is her cause entrusted
 to my feeble hands. I am not entering into
 controversy, but am merely stating facts. When
 the doctrine of the Church is misrepresented,
 and there is danger of younger disciples being
 misled, I feel it my duty, as a faithful soldier of
 Christ, *to stand between the dead and the living,*
and stay the plague. If the minds of any are
 wavering, if the language of the New Testament
 appear to admit of doubt, let me advise them
 to consult the works of our Reformers. I would
 call their attention particularly to the Confession

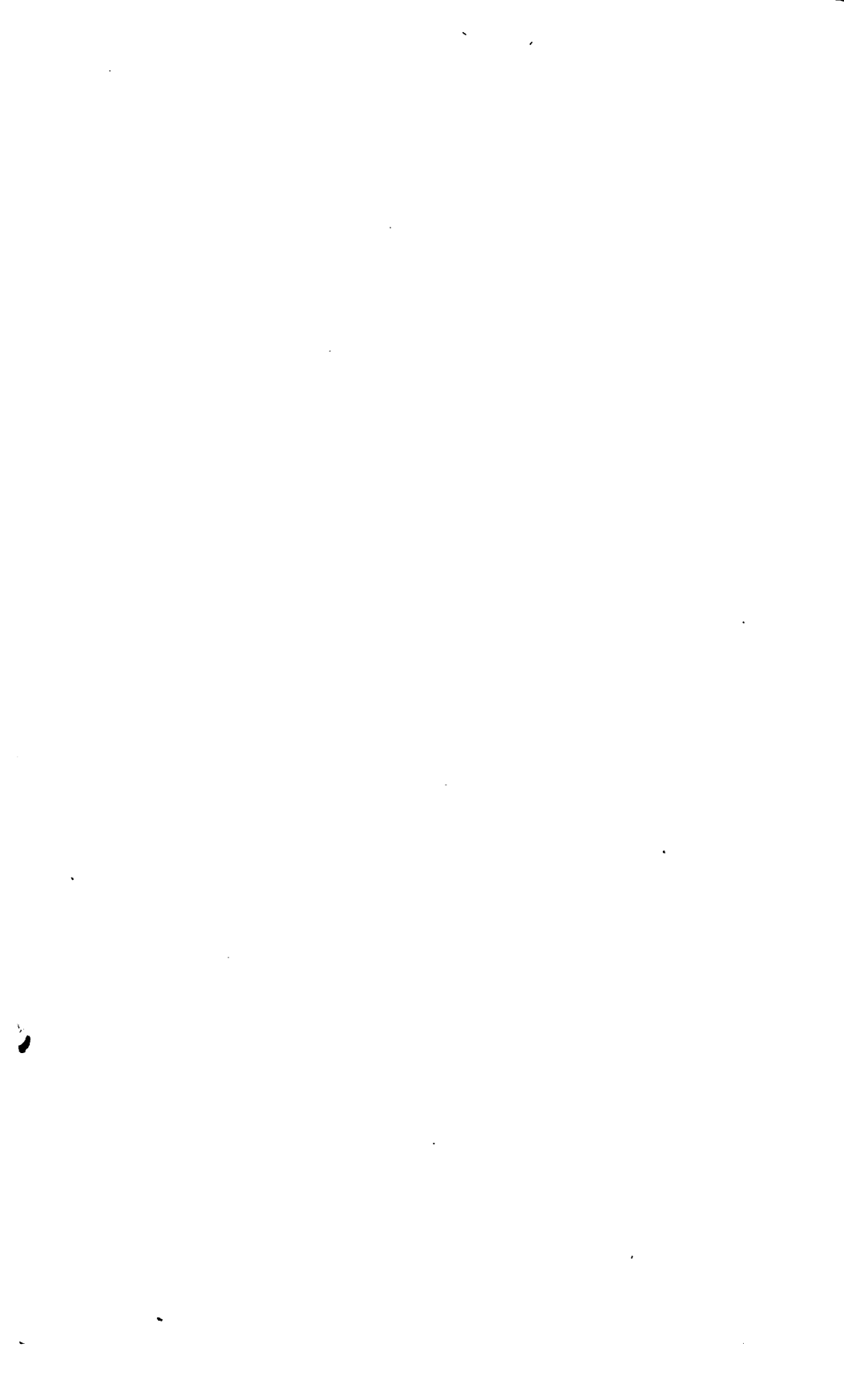
° Instit. iii. 22, 1.

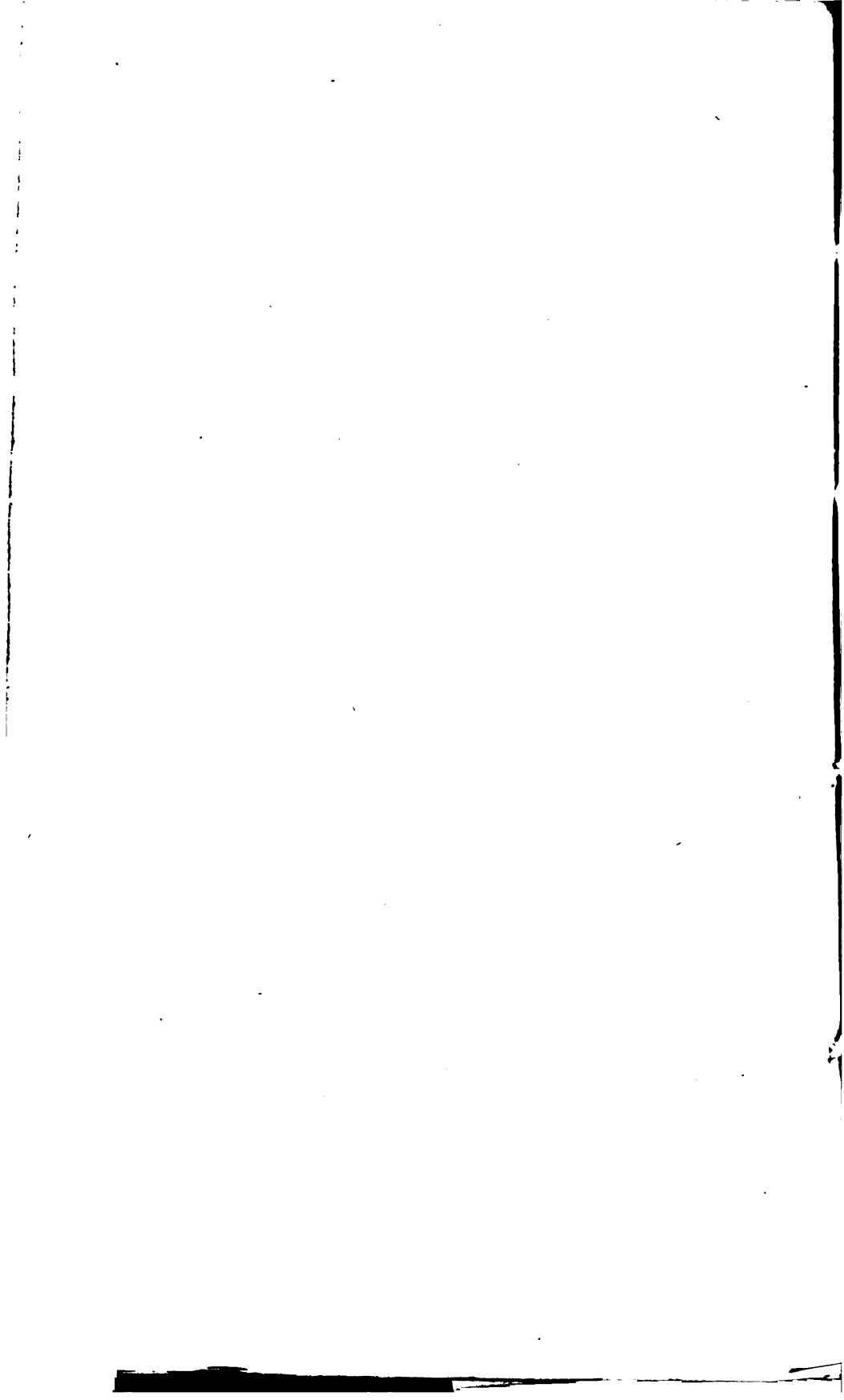
of the Reformed Churches in Germany, of which they may read first the Confession of Augsburg, published in 1530, or its compendium the Confession of Wirtemberg, published in 1551. The *Loci Theologici* of Melancthon, (in any edition subsequent to 1545,) may be taken as speaking the sentiments of all the Lutheran divines: and when a person has studied these, he may read the opinions of our own Church in the Homilies upon Salvation, Faith, and Good Works. If he would proceed to more modern writings, I would refer him to Archbishop Laurence's Bampton Lectures; a work, which produced conviction in my own mind some years ago; and though I lament the event, which has called forth these remarks, I am thankful to repeat the gratification of consulting such a document.

I hope, that nothing more will be said or written upon this unhappy subject. My earnest prayer to God is for peace and charity among ourselves. If a man think his brother in error upon points which concern his salvation, let him reason with him mildly: but let him first study his own heart, and seek counsel of the Holy Spirit. It is possible, that he may be mistaking the counsels of men for the revelations of God: he may be running counter to the whole stream of authority, of Fathers and of Councils, of Con-

fessors and Reformers : and though truth *may* still be on his side, it is a fearful thing to think, that Christ has suffered his Church to continue in error for eighteen centuries. My own faith tells me, that this cannot be. With the Bible in one hand, and the Articles of our Church in the other, I bless God, who by raising his Son from the dead has opened also unto me the gate of everlasting life : I bless Him, that He has taught me to trust, not to my own works, but to the assistance of his Holy Spirit : and though with St. Paul I dare not in this life *count myself to have apprehended*, or pronounce my sins to be forgiven, may God grant that they, who feel this assurance, may have no cause for misgiving or for fear, either in the hour of death, or at the day of judgment.

THE END.





PH. 5831.

ONE REASON

FOR

NOT ENTERING INTO CONTROVERSY

WITH AN

ANONYMOUS AUTHOR

OF

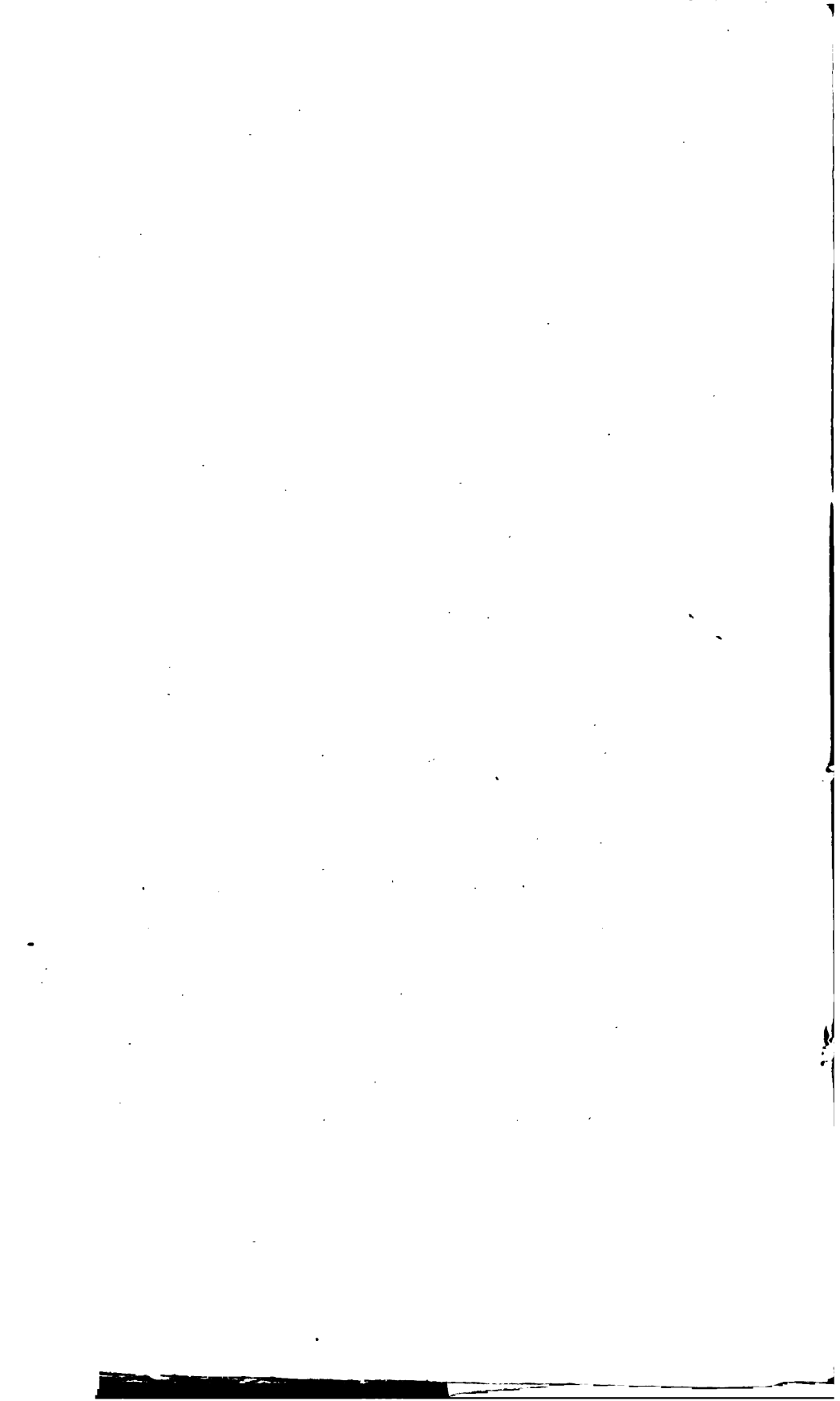
STRICTURES.



OXFORD:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY W. BAXTER.

1831.



ONE REASON,

&c.

I SAID in my "Remarks upon a Sermon preached at St. Mary's," that I was not entering into controversy, and I thought that nothing would have induced me to write any thing more upon the question which has arisen. I am not now addressing myself to the Author of the Sermon. He has defended his statements with sincerity and boldness. He has again substituted declamation for argument ; but I am still willing to hope that there is no breach of Christian charity between us. If I know my own heart, I can answer for one of the parties.

I have however read another publication with very different feelings. Not, I trust, with a less impression of the Christian duty of forgiveness: but we are not called upon to view the anony-

mous calumniator in the same light as him who makes his attack honestly and openly. I was not ashamed to put my name to my "Remarks:" and if I have mistated facts, or reasoned erroneously, I have no wish to screen myself from the disgrace. Let those who attack me, do the same. The Author of the "Strictures" may find it convenient to wear a mask, and I have no wish to tear it off. I have no wish to know the name of a person, who stabs in the dark: and when I repeat my assertion, that I am not entering into controversy, I would add, that this opponent at least has no right to expect it, till he shews equal courage and avows his name.

My present observations will be very brief. They are confined to a single point, and to a question of fact. They are intended merely to point out to the reader, that the Author of the "Strictures" has good reason to conceal his name. When he chooses to disclose it, I shall perhaps know whether he is to be charged with inexcusable ignorance, or wilful misstatement. If the justice of my criticism is disproved, I will proceed to some other of his assertions: but till this is done, I shall confine myself to only one,

and the reader may judge of the credit which he is to give to anonymous strictures.

I had said in my Remarks, "I assert fearlessly, and could prove it to demonstration, that there was no Christian writer for the first four centuries, except Augustin, who held sentiments upon any of these points at all in accordance with those of Calvin." The Author of the "Strictures" retorts my words, and says, "Now on this one point I would be content to rest the controversy, and I fearlessly assert, and will prove it to demonstration, that this statement is incorrect." His "demonstration" then follows, which is taken from the Epistle of Ignatius to the Church of Smyrna; and the writer says of Ignatius, "He addresses the Smyrnæans as 'filled with faith and love, and *indefectible* in every gift of grace.'" The quotation surprised me, when I first read it: and having studied Ignatius with some attention, I did not immediately recognize it: but my surprise will be transferred to the reader, together perhaps with some other feelings, when he finds the original passage to be as follows: ἐκκλησία Θεοῦ πατρὸς—πεπληρωμένη ἐν πίστει καὶ ἀγάπῃ, ἀνυστεγῆτω

οὐση παντὸς χαρίσματος. The word therefore, which is to furnish the demonstration, and which is translated *indefectible*, is ἀνυστερήτω: and if it was not impossible to help laughing at such a mistake, I could find other terms for the lamentable exposure. A school-boy knows, that a word formed like ὑστερητὸς would not mean *defectibilis*, but *deficiens*: ἀνυστερητικός (if such a word may be coined) would be more to the writer's purpose: but the truth is, that ὑστερεῖν in this place has nothing to do with *deficere* in the sense which this writer attaches to it: and he must sit down, either to study Greek, or to learn what is meant by "defectibility of grace." He ought to have known, that Ignatius alluded to those words of St. Paul in 1 Cor. i. 7. ὥστε ὑμᾶς μὴ ὑστερεῖσθαι ἐν μηδενὶ χαρίσματος, which our translators seem to have rendered very properly, *so that ye come behind in no gift: i. e. so that ye are wanting in no spiritual gift, or, ye are not behind other Churches in the enjoyment of spiritual gifts.* The words of Ignatius, ἀνυστερήτω παντὸς χαρίσματος, contain a manifest allusion to those of the apostle, μὴ ὑστερεῖσθαι ἐν μηδενὶ χαρίσματος, and the holy martyr meant to say of the Church of Smyrna, that it was not

wanting in any spiritual gift: but as to pronouncing these gifts to be *indefectible*, it is palpable to every person, except this anonymous patristic, that the passage declares no such thing. The writer goes on to say of this, and two other passages which he quotes, "If these three ex-
 " tracts are not sufficient to prove the existence
 " of such doctrines as, 1st, the indefectibility of
 " grace, 2d, &c. &c.—if, I say, these ex-
 " tracts do not prove these points, there surely
 " can be no meaning in words. Should they be
 " deemed insufficient by the reader, let me refer
 " him for additional proof to the writings of Bar-
 " nabas, and Clement, and Polycarp."

The reader would scarcely believe, that the passage quoted above is the only one advanced to prove, that the Fathers held the indefectibility of grace; and he will now perhaps acquit me of arrogance, if I decline to enter into controversy with such an opponent. When he can read Ignatius in Greek, when he can construe a plain sentence, and when he avows his name, I may perhaps return to his lucubrations: but until that period arrives, he must allow me to form my own judgment of Barnabas, Clement,

and Polycarp. When I am guilty of a blunder, as gross as that which I have exposed, the reader will be at liberty to disbelieve my statements: but till then, I shall repeat my assertion, " that " there was no Christian writer for the first four " centuries, except Augustin, who held senti- " ments upon any of these points at all in ac- " cordance with those of Calvin : " an assertion, which the Author of the Sermon has not attempted to disprove, and which the Author of the Strictures has shewn himself incapable of understanding. It rests with himself, whether other errors are to be exposed.

EDWARD BURTON.

THE END.

